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[296] removed by drying or by fermentation, and the leaves are very bitter.

(6) There is a constant but generally ineffective struggle

• [136] against insects which damage the tobacco crop. The most serious pest is the ant, which not only cuts the leaves but which also covers whole plants with extensive mounds. A number of plant diseases are common in the Recôncavo--their general effect is to reduce quality rather than to destroy the crop. The effects of plant diseases generally are masked by the much greater damage which occurs in cultivation and processing.

241 (7) The practices of land clearing, soil preparation, planting, harvesting, and curing, discussed above, are more highly standardized than is the sequence of land use. The "ideal" land use sequence is more characteristic of the zone of tobacco and manioc south of the Rio Paraguau--the Southwestern Recôncavo--than north of it. This land use sequence has been used as a standard of comparison because it is practiced where the highest quality of tobacco is grown and because it was the most commonly observed practice in most other parts of the tobacco-manioc region. However, even in this southwestern area, departures from the "ideal" sequence are relatively common--the introduction of corn and/or beans between tobacco and manioc is especially important. The sequence which is followed after tobacco cultivation depends not only upon the relative price of farinha de mandioca, corn, and beans, but also on the amount of fertilizer applied to the tobacco plot the previous year. Moreover, the chosen sequence will depend upon the original quality of the soil. In Cruz das Almas, at least, corn and beans were not planted in the old tobacco field unless the cultivator felt assured that the fertility was reasonably certain. If substantial risks were involved, manioc was planted.⁶